



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 15, 2005

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TAX SEASON A MAJOR BOOST TO CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS *INCOME TAX REFUND OFFSET PROGRAM ONE OF MANY TOOLS TO ENSURE CHILDREN RECEIVING SUPPORT*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The Federal Income Tax Refund Offset program is paying off for Tennessee children. Parents who aren't paying their child support but expect to find a tax refund in the mailbox are out of luck. The Tennessee Department of Human Services' Child Support Division is intercepting these refunds and turning them over to those who should have been receiving support all along. More than \$20 million in tax refunds have been seized in Tennessee since February. These IRS collections are up five percent over the same period last year.

"The Federal Tax Refund Offset Program is another excellent tool that enables the Department to help children who are owed, but not receiving, their court-ordered support," said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. "Only parents who fail to make the required payments for their children are subject to this process. We will continue to use aggressively all methods available to ensure children receive the support to which they are entitled."

In addition to the Tax Refund Offset Program, the Department uses enforcement tools such as administrative wage assignments, license revocation and liens. Non-paying parents who are awarded worker's compensation claims are finding these funds being diverted to their children. Nearly \$100,000 in claims have been seized and distributed over the last two months.

The Department of Human Services continues to see increases in its child support collections. More than \$46 million were collected in March. Human Services' Child Support Division and its offices across the state have increased collections so far this state fiscal year by nearly eight percent over last year. From July 2004 through March 2005, more than \$323 million in child support payments were collected.

For more information on the Tennessee Child Support Program, visit:
<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/child-support.htm>

For more information on Federal Offset Programs, visit:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/fop/fop.htm>

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